



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

March 7, 2023

The Honorable Joseline A. Peña-Melnyk  
Chair, House Health and Government Operations Committee  
241 House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

**Re: HB 1146 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Adult and Pediatric Dental Services – Review of Reimbursement Rates – Letter of Support with Amendments**

Dear Chair Peña-Melnyk and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support with amendments for House Bill (HB) 1146 – Maryland Medical Assistance Program – Adult and Pediatric Dental Services – Review of Reimbursement Rates. This bill will require MDH to review billed charges and reimbursement rates for adult and pediatric dental services every three years.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, the General Assembly allocated approximately \$940,000 in state general funds (\$2.15 million with matching federal funds) to increase fees for five dental procedures in January through June 2015. The annual equivalent of \$4.3 million was earmarked for those five procedures, which include preventive and educational services. Starting July 1, 2022, the reimbursement rates for certain dental services were increased by 9.4%; approximately \$19.5 million in total funds were allocated for this increase. The 2022 rate increase targeted a set of 32 different high utilization codes based on stakeholder feedback, and none of the five procedures included in the 2015 rate increase were included in the 2022 rate increase.

Utilization rates have increased and provider networks have expanded since MDH improved and rebranded its dental benefit as the Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program. Maryland dental utilization will continue to outpace national averages as MDH administers the new adult dental coverage effective January 1, 2023.

An additional \$20 million is included in the Governor's proposed budget to support another rate increase in FY24. If implemented, these funds will be sufficient to support an additional 5.75% increase for all dental rates. Additionally, the Medicaid program is adding silver diamine fluoride to its benefit package and increasing ambulatory surgery rates for dental procedures.

In light of these recent actions, MDH proposes to amend the bill to remove the sections requiring reimbursement rates be revised. MDH is committed to periodically re-evaluating the adequacy of reimbursement rates for dental services and will continue to do so as outlined in this bill.

If you need more information, please do not hesitate to contact Megan Peters, Acting Director of Governmental Affairs at [megan.peters@maryland.gov](mailto:megan.peters@maryland.gov) or (410) 260-3190.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Herrera Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" being more prominent than the last name "Scott".

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

**AMENDMENTS TO HOUSE BILL 1146**

(First Reading File Bill)

On Page 1, in line 6, strike beginning with “requiring” down through “charges;” in line 10.

Strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 30 on page 2 down through line 9 on page 3, inclusive.